United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1394
17 May 1993

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, concerned at reports of renewed fighting in Kabul, urges all parties to refrain from any further use of force and to continue searching for political solution.

+ International Polling Station Officers arrive in Cambodia for 23 May elections after training in Thailand; dependents of United Nations staff instructed to leave Phnom Penh for security reasons; Uruguayan UNTAC marine shot dead in city.

+ Croatian Government and local Serb authorities to meet tomorrow at Topusko, in Sector North, to "sign immediate interim cease-fire", according to UNPROFOR.

+ Kuwait contributes $20 million to escrow account established by Security Council after Persian Gulf war to pay for damages, humanitarian activities and other costs.

+ International Fund for Agricultural Development lends Viet Nam $18.35 million -- country's first multilateral financial assistance in more than two decades.

+ Trusteeship Council to send mission to observe further plebiscite to territory of Palau, scheduled for 27 July 1993.

+ Foreign direct investment by transnational corporations from developing countries boosts exports and access to technology, according to study by Department of Economic and Social Development.

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Concerned at reports of renewed fighting in Kabul, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today urged all parties to refrain from any further use of force and to continue searching for non-violent ways to implement their commitment to find a political solution.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

In a statement issued at Headquarters, he expressed dismay over the recent escalation of fighting in and around the Afghan capital, and, in particular, by the "indiscriminate rocket attacks" which have resulted in heavy casualties among the civilian population.

Since the signing of the Geneva Accords in April 1988, the United Nations has encouraged a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan that would respect "the will of all the Afghan people". After the 1990 Soviet withdrawal from the country, consensus seemed to have emerged to convene a gathering of Afghans in order to reach agreement on a transitional period leading to the establishment of a broad-based Government through free and fair elections. However, in August 1992, four months after the establishment of the Mujahidin Interim Council in Kabul, fighting erupted between the various groups. In spite of several appeals by the Secretary-General and the Security Council to end the fighting, the political instability continues. In addition, the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated with the recent influx of more than one million refugees from neighbouring countries to a country devastated by 15 years of war.

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Nine hundred and fifty International Polling Station Officers from 43 countries and various United Nations agencies have begun arriving in Cambodia in preparation for the 23 May elections, according to a spokesman for the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The Officers had been training in Jomtien, Thailand.

The spokesman confirmed that dependents of 220 United Nations agency staff in Phnom Penh had been instructed from New York to leave Cambodia. The decision had been based on security considerations and the belief that people affiliated with United Nations staff but not working in the country should not be exposed to avoidable risks.

In a separate development, a member of the Uruguayan UNTAC marine contingent in Cambodia died Saturday at the UNTAC Field Hospital in Phnom Penh after having being shot, the spokesman said. The 34 year-old Corporal Sergeant, Daniel Bustamente Rios, had been wearing civilian clothes when he was shot. The incident was being investigated.

Meanwhile, 380 Cambodians on a walk for peace -- the Dhamma Yatra -- were scheduled to arrive in Phnom Penh on 22 May. The walkers, which included monks, nuns and lay people, had set out from Siem Reap at the beginning of May and had passed the most difficult part of the journey -- from Siem Reap to Kompong Thom -- without any problems. Thousands of Cambodians had shown up along the roadside to offer them food, shelter and encouragement.

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The Croatian Government and local Serb authorities will meet face-to-face tomorrow at Topusko, in Sector North, to "sign an immediate interim cease-fire", according to a press release issued by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), yesterday, 16 May.

The meeting, which is the first between the parties since the outbreak of hostilities on 22 January, will be held under the auspices of UNPROFOR and will be chaired by the Deputy Chief of Mission, Cedric Thornberry. An agreement was worked out by the two sides on 6 April in Geneva under the auspices of Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia, to set a timetable for the peace process.

The final signing of the cease-fire agreement will enable the implementation of resolution 802 (1993) which called for immediate withdrawal from the United Nations Protected Areas and demanded that the Serb local militia hand over their heavy weapons to UNPROFOR. The extension of the mandate of UNPROFOR in Croatia is pending the cease-fire agreement.

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Kuwait has contributed $20 million to the escrow account created by the Security Council after the Persian Gulf war to pay for damages, humanitarian activities and other costs in connection with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The escrow account, which was created under resolution 706 (1991), is made up of funds from revenues of sale of Iraqi oil, among other things.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 13 May, the Kuwaiti Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Mohammad A. Abulhasan, asked that 30 per cent of the contribution be earmarked to the Compensation Fund. That Fund was established by the Council to pay for damages suffered by individuals or States as a result of the Iraqi invasion in August 1990.

The letter also asked that the remainder of the contribution be made available for the United Nations Boundary Commission, costs of the return of Kuwaiti property seized by Iraq and humanitarian activities in Iraq.
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The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) today agreed to lend Viet Nam $18.35 million -- the country's first multilateral financial assistance in more than two decades, according to an IFAD press release. The highly concessional loan would support a new resource management project in the province of Tuyen Quang.

The project, which would be implemented over seven years starting in June, aims to help the rural poor to manage their natural resources and rural infrastructure in order to increase agricultural production and raise incomes. It also aims at increasing reliance on the free market for the distribution of goods and services.

(more)

Viet Nam decided to abandon its centrally-planned policies in 1986, giving way to market forces in order to stimulate its economy, IFAD said. However, economic recovery was obstructed by inflation, an unwieldy bureaucracy and the collapse of the Soviet Union, its main source of aid and biggest trading partner.

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The Trusteeship Council has decided to send a visiting mission to Palau to observe an report on the plebiscite scheduled for 27 July 1993 on the compact of Free Association with the United States.

In a draft resolution adopted without a vote, the Council would have the mission dispatched on the understanding that pending legal challenges relating to the plebiscite were adjudicated definitively beforehand.

In Palau, seven earlier plebiscites failed to achieve the constitutionally mandated 75 per cent vote needed to approve the proposed Compact of Free Association.

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The Transnational Corporations and Management Division of the Department of Economic and Social Development (DESD) has released a study, "Transnational Corporations from Developing Countries: Impact on Their Home Countries".

The study notes that the stock of foreign direct investment from developing countries had reached almost $110 billion by the end of the 1980s, or 8 per cent of the world's outward foreign direct investment. It concluded that such investment by transnational corporations benefitted their home countries by stimulating exports and by tapping into technological developments in host countries.

Profitability could be increased as a result of greater corporate integration, diversification of portfolios, spreading of costs and reduction of tax liabilities, the study said. Although transnational corporations tried to minimize tax burdens, outward foreign direct investment generated income, trade and employment, and thus raised government revenues.

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